Advanced Science Research Center

KPF create glassy twins for new CUNY campus
by Julia Galef

The curves of the two research buildings are an abstraction of the CUNY campus grid.

**Architect:** Kohn Pedersen Fox  
**Client:** City University of New York  
**Location:** 133rd Street and St. Nicholas Terrace  
**Completion:** 2013

A new science research center on the City University of New York’s new South Campus at City College in Harlem pulls the existing campus gridlines across 135th Street and twists them into undulating curves. Designed by Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF), the two glass 200,000-square-foot research buildings are set on an elevated rock outcropping along St. Nicholas Park, graciously accommodating the jagged environs.

Though challenging to build on, the rock muffles vibrations that might disturb the labs’ sensitive equipment. With these two buildings and a third scheduled for phase two, the university hopes to attract scientists working in fields like biology, physics, and neurology. KPF tried to build as much flexibility as possible into the design, with each room able to transform easily from a wet lab into a physics lab. Glass-walled communal break rooms positioned just off the main stairway aim to catch the eye of passing scientists and spark interdisciplinary cross-pollination.

Though the buildings mirror each other in size and shape, they’re not identical. “We’ve been talking about them like fraternal twins,” said KPF director Hana Kassem. One will include spaces for students and features bold slashes of color inside, while the second is for research only, and trades its twin’s bold colors for muted tones and textures.

http://wirednewyork.com/forum/showthread.php?t=4138&page=3&s=0c85c52931fcfcdc84d7240a6453fab
Inside the lobby of one of the new research buildings.

The new buildings are meant to encourage transparency and interaction.